

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

February 6, 2004

Chairman Jim Nussle
Committee on the Budget
309 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Nussle:

Since 1975, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has helped ensure that students with disabilities receive the quality education they deserve. For nearly 30 years, however, the federal government has failed to fulfill its funding promise to pay 40% of the cost of special education. The lack of adequate federal funding places an unfair burden on local school districts struggling to meet the education needs of all students, including a growing number of students with disabilities, and local taxpayers.

The House of Representatives voted to create a clear path to attain full federal funding in H.R. 1350, the Improving Education Results for Children with Disabilities Act. Over the next seven years, the amount of federal funding would incrementally increase until the full 40% was reached in FY 2010. This commitment was made and agreed to by an overwhelming majority in the House. Yet funding for special education in the FY 2004 Consolidated Appropriations Act fell \$1 billion below our commitment. Despite our promises - thirty years ago and again this year - we have failed.

As you prepare your FY 2005 House Budget Resolution, please include at least \$13.575 billion for the Part B grants-to-states and help regain this lost faith. This amount would put the federal government back on track towards its promise to fully fund the federal government's share of IDEA costs.

I look forward to working with you on this critical matter and am hopeful that our efforts will help ease the strain that this unfunded federal mandate places on our local communities.

Sincerely,

Charles F. Bass
Mike Rogers

Rep. Simmons
Feb Bradley

~~RB~~

Denise L. Majette

~~Tom Gull~~

Todd R. Blatto

Donald M. Payne

Jim Ramstad

Jim Langeron

Mike McIntyre

Joe Stuber

Michael H. Michael

~~James Moran~~

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